

SIGN ORDINANCE REVISIONS

(New text is underlined)

Amend Article 7.000 – Signs and Illumination as set forth below.

I. Delete the existing Section 7.12 – Applicability and substitute therefor the following:

7.12 *Applicability*

A. *General Applicability*

No signs or advertising devices of any kind or nature shall be erected or maintained on any premises or affixed to the inside or outside of any structure to be visible from the outside of any structure except as specifically permitted in this Article 7.000.

B. *MXD District*

The provisions of this Section 7.10 shall not be applicable in the MXD District, Article 14.000 of this Ordinance, during the life of the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan, as amended.

C. *Signs in the Public Way*

Signs and banners located entirely within a public way are not subject to the provisions of this Article 7.000 except as may be specifically provided for elsewhere in this Article 7.000.

<p>NOTE: <i>Paragraph A is existing language in Section 7.12. Paragraph B carries forward the exemption already provided for in the MXD district regulations in Article 14.000. Paragraph C is new language that makes explicit the current administrative interpretation of the provisions of Article 7.000.</i></p>

II. In Section 7.14 – Calculation of Area and Height of Signs, insert a new Paragraph C. Re-designate existing Paragraphs C to E as D to F.

7.14 *Calculation of Area and Height of Signs*

C. For all signs, where a color or graphic pattern constitutes a Corporate or Brand Identification (by custom, contract or practice) as illustrated in advertising or in sign or building designs employed at multiple locations, the full extent of that background color or graphic

pattern shall be calculated as part of the sign area when it is associated with any logo, lettering, or other graphic element constituting a sign.

NOTE: *The new Paragraph C makes it clear that when a corporation employs color or graphic patterns as part of its identification, those elements will be counted as part of the area of the sign.*

III. In Section 7.16.11 – Exempt Signs, insert an additional phrase in Paragraph A2 and insert a new Paragraph A3 as set forth below. Renumber existing Paragraphs A3-7 to A4-8.

7.16.11 Exempt Signs

A. In All Districts:

1. Signs not visible from a public way. (All illumination permitted.)
2. Official traffic and directional signs, **including bus and shuttle schedules.** (All illumination permitted.)

3. Other signs in the public way.

NOTE: *Paragraph A3 reiterates the exemption described in Section 7.12 above.*

IV. In Section 7.16.22 – [permitted signs in] All Business, Office and Industrial Districts, insert a new Paragraph D3 to read as follows.

3. Building Identification Signs

For each building on a lot (except hotels and motels, which shall be subject to Paragraph 2 above), one Wall Sign for each street the lot abuts (but in no case more than two signs per building) may exceed the maximum Height of Signs and the maximum Area of Signs limitations set forth in Section 7.16.22, Paragraph C above, subject to the following conditions and limitations:

- (a) Any such sign shall be naturally or externally illuminated only.**
- (b) The sign may be located at any height below the roof of the building.**
- (c) Where the sign is located at a height greater than one hundred (100) feet, the maximum Area of Sign may be increased to ninety (90) square feet.**

(d) The sign shall consist of individual letters or graphic symbols attached directly to the building face or to a raceway.

(e) The sign shall be accessory to a tenant or activity located on the lot or within the building, or identifies the building itself.

(f) All other provisions of this Article 7.000 shall continue to apply, including the Total Area of Signs Permitted per Lot and the total area of signs permitted on any individual Sign Frontage.

NOTE: *This new Paragraph 3 would allow a limited number of wall signs on a building to exceed the normal 20 foot height limit in order to identify the building or a major tenant within the building. The provision would not increase the total area of signs permitted on a building or lot but would relax the height and area limitations for individual wall signs.*

V. In Section 7.16.22 – [permitted signs in] All Business, Office and Industrial Districts, insert a new Sub-section E to read as follows.

E. General Waiver of Sign Limitations

The limitations and restrictions of Section 7.16.22, Paragraphs A-C above and Section 7.16.3 below may be waived by special permit from the Board of Zoning Appeal, within the context of an approved plan for all prospective signs on a lot, subject to the following requirements and limitations.

1. The Plan shall allocate all permitted sign area on a lot (as permitted in this Section 7.16.22), including existing signs to remain and prospective signs. The proposed Plan shall show the location, size, dimensions, and method of illumination of all existing and prospective signs on the lot.

The applicant may choose not to allocate all of the sign area permitted on the lot; in such case, future allocation of that additional area shall require the issuance of a new special permit by the special permit granting authority even if such additional sign area is proposed to be used in a manner conforming to the limitations of Paragraphs A-C above unless the Plan shall identify a process by which such additional sign area may be approved.

2. A narrative shall describe the variations requested from the normally applicable restrictions and limitations of Section 7.16.22, Paragraph A-C above and how those variations better serve the objectives of this Article 7.000 and any applicable area-wide plans adopted by the City of Cambridge.

3. No sign in the approved Plan may be higher than twenty (20) feet unless otherwise permitted in this Article 7.000 or previously approved by variance.

4. The area of all existing and prospective signs identified in the Plan shall not exceed the area of sign permitted on the lot as set forth in this Section 7.16.22.

5. As a condition of the permit, the permit granting authority may require the removal of existing signs on the lot not conforming to the requirements of this Sub-section E (e.g. signs above the permitted height) including signs permitted by variance.

The special permit granting authority shall approve the process and timing by which such non-conforming signs are brought into conformance with the requirements of this Paragraph E and the approved Plan.

6. Location, size, dimensions, and method of illumination for individual signs may be presented in schematic detail. In such case the special permit decision shall establish a process by which the final design of each individual sign is approved.

NOTE: *This new Sub-Section E would allow variations in the size, height and illumination of individual wall, freestanding and projecting signs by special permit from the BZA if the variations are incorporated within a plan for the all signage to be permitted on a lot. Such flexibility would allow the special permit granting authority to permit variations in the design of individual sign so that they can better reflect the unique circumstances of a specific site and, encourage better and more interesting sign designs. The total area of signs allowed on a site is not increased.*

VI. Create a new Section 7.16.23 to read as follows.

17.16. 23 Special Sign Provisions for Non-Profit Theaters, Other Performance Spaces, Museums, Galleries, Libraries and Cinemas.
Notwithstanding the limitations of Sections 7.16.21 and 7.16.22 above and Section 7.16.3 below, additional signs shall be permitted on lots containing a theater, performance space, museum, library or art gallery owned and operated by a non-profit institution (which institution is granted the educational and religious exemption provided in Section 3 of Chapter 40A) or municipality for the purpose of identifying changing educational programs and exhibits open to the public occurring in those facilities, subject to the following limitations and conditions:

A. The signs may be any combination of wall, projecting or freestanding signs.

B. The signs shall not be subject to the Area of Sign, Height of Sign and Number of Signs limitations found in Sections 7.16.21, 7.16.22 and Section 7.16.3.

C. The signs shall be made of cloth, canvas or other similar flexible material and may only be naturally or externally illuminated.

D. A freestanding sign may not be higher than 25 feet. Signs on a building wall may not be higher than fifty feet.

E. Any individual sign shall be temporary in nature and be replaced at intervals not to exceed one year.

F. The maximum area of individual Freestanding or Projecting Signs shall be 50 square feet; the maximum area of individual Wall Signs shall be 200 square feet.

G. The total area of signs permitted on the lot shall be determined by the following:

(a) In non-residential districts the total area of signs on a lot shall be subject to the limitations for Total Area of Signs Permitted Per Lot as set forth in Section 7.16.22 for signs on the outside of the building (and shall be inclusive of any other signs on the lot not employing the provisions of this Section 7.16.23).

(b) In residential districts, the total area of signs on the lot shall be limited by the application of the formula of one square foot of sign for each linear foot of Sign Frontage on the lot for that portion of a building containing the eligible activity (and shall be inclusive of any other signs on the lot not employing the provisions of this Section 7.16.23).

H. All other provisions of this Article 7.000 shall continue to apply.

NOTE: *This new Section is intended to allow the kinds of temporary graphic notices of changing exhibits and performance programs now customary at museums and performance spaces and which give visual interest to the activities that occur at such venues.*